

OUR ROMAN LETTER

(By "SCOTTUS.")

Those who are likely to be in correspondence with Rome would do well to note an innovation recently introduced by the post office authorities, consisting in the division of the city into some 50 or 60 numbered districts for the purpose of facilitating the sorting and distribution of the multitudinous correspondence that is daily poured in from all quarters of the globe. For the future, then, it is requested that all letters should bear after the word Rome the number of the district to which they are addressed. An example or two will illustrate what is meant. Thus letters to the Irish College should be addressed "Irish College, Rome 3"; those to the Irish Augustinians, "Rome 26"; and those to the Irish Franciscans, "Rome 6."

In this connection it may not be amiss to mention the advisability of writing the words of the address as clearly as possible. To use what Mark Twain thought was a joke, the postmen (and in these days the post-women) are all foreigners, and cannot be expected to be experts in calligraphy. That so few letters fail to reach their destination is a high tribute to the intelligence of these long-suffering workers. But at the same time, letters are often delivered at the wrong address, and thus fail to reach their proper destination as early as might be, owing to the difficulty or impossibility of making out what the writers had in mind when penning the address. Bearing this caution in mind, and taking the precaution of inserting the proper number after the word Rome, the labor of the post office workers will be facilitated, and letters will be delivered with greater despatch than was possible before.

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Of course there is the censor, and the censor apparently we have always with us. When he is to take his long-expected departure no one knows. But I imagine Irish readers do not need to be reminded of the existence or operations of that much abused gentleman who apparently is likely to be always with them also, if we are to believe an announcement appearing in the Italian papers a few days ago. He is certainly here, as can easily be seen by glancing at the pages of the morning's papers where blank patches betray his vigilance just as infallibly as ruined fields the passing of the locust. In one way there is noticeable a slight change here in this respect. Irish news is more to the fore than it was allowed to be a month ago, and on the whole it is now of a sympathetic nature. Naturally much depends on the turn events take at a given moment in Paris—so long as all runs smoothly there, and so long as the Welsh Wagtail warbles in accordance with Italian wishes, we cannot expect Italian newspapers to go into ecstasies about us—but the moment there appears the slightest rift in the pipes we expect our position to be referred to in sympathetic terms, and are seldom disappointed. One of the most authoritative of the morning's papers, the *Tempo*, for instance, devotes a long article to Mr. O'Kelly's efforts at Paris with which the writer is evidently in keen sympathy. And in a leading article of the same journal, attention is drawn in biting terms to the wobbly policy pursued by the Big Four with regard to national aspirations. Having professed the deepest admiration for the Wilsonian decalogue the article bursts forth into bitter lamentations: "Wilson is no longer the herald of pure justice and equity. He seems to have been frozen into a position of intransigence with regard to certain principles affecting respect for presumed nationalities,—but he seems to be thus affected only to the detriment of those whose threats he fears not. Why in the long run does not the Puritan ex-president of Princeton listen to the mournful voice of Ireland, and why does he hold that the Irish question is one between Ireland and Great Britain alone, while at the same time claiming to intervene with infallible authority in our (Italian) conflict with the Jugo Slavs, whose

revolt is so feeble in comparison with that of the Irish? We believe that the best and only argument to invoke in this hour, so decisive of the fate of our territorial programme at Paris, is that which is offered by the attitude assumed by Wilson with regard to parallel problems of the various Allied countries. Mr. Wilson has no right to throw his decalogue in our teeth while he is furtively consigning it to his pocket the moment the assertion of it proves disagreeable to his friends at the other side of the English Channel. But then, to be sure, we are not in a position to show our teeth, or perhaps the sacrifice of our aspirations will not create embarrassment for the plutocracy across the Atlantic. To sacrifice Italy at the present moment, when England is being given a free hand in the dealing with national problems such as that of Ireland, would be tantamount to a cool abandoning of the policy of coherence and justice. Wilson is evidently relying too much on the prestige of his name and his country. But the Peace Congress is not a school of philosophy, nor is he a Pythagoras." It would be easy to multiply passages of a similar tone; but the above should suffice to convey some idea of the trend of opinion in this country. For the present all that need be added in this connection is to remark that while the emissaries of the British Embassy have failed to secure the repression of independent views on the subject, there is no indication that the same institution hesitates to draw the salaries of its officials, part of which doubtless is derived from the twenty or thirty millions which Ireland is contributing towards the making of the world safe for something or other: just as there is no sign, quite the contrary, that certain English-speaking Benedictines here, who for years have done their best to inspire Catholic and other newspaper offices with anti-Irish feeling, are at all opposed to the idea of their school at St. Benedict's near Gorey being used as a feeder for the more aristocratic groves of Downside in England.

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Other and higher interests are apparently not faring better at the hands of the Quadrumvirate. Apart from the future position of the Catholic Church in Alsace-Lorraine where naturally Catholics may expect that liberty by which France herself is free, the tendency of events in the East, and particularly in the Holy Land, is anything at all but reassuring from the Catholic point of view. Proselytism is the order of the day. Protestant societies go their way, scattering gold right and left to save the poor benighted papists from the errors of the Scarlet Woman; while societies that sail under the banner of colored crosses, or pose as non-sectarian semi-military Christian organisations with triangular crests and aims, are joining in the cry. Small wonder that recently the Holy Father felt constrained to issue a warning, and at the same time to make a moving appeal to the faithful all the world over to come to the rescue of the Catholics of the Holy Land, whose faith is menaced by hordes moving onward to the tune of penny rolls, and soup and hairy bacon. Recent reports go to show that not only is proselytism rife in the Holy Land, but that venerable shrines which for centuries have been under the loving care of the Franciscans are about to be handed over to countries or bodies that have no love for Rome. It is even stated that in all these transactions the Pope has been completely ignored, thus showing how serious the prophets were in predicting that a new era had dawned in which every element that could make for peace would be invited to lend a helping hand.

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Yet there are compensations either actual or expected. A few days ago, almost on the 510th anniversary of the day when the lowly peasant maid of Domremy appeared before Orleans with gleaming sword in hand and scattered the proudest knights that England had ever sent forth to battle, a ceremony was held in the Vatican and a decree read in the presence of the Pope vouching for the authenticity of two miracles ascribed to the intercession of the same maid who was